



FAO'S GLOBAL PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE





FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SUPPORT ALMOST 8 PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION – AND THEY ARE VULNERABLE

Nearly 45 million people are directly engaged in fishing or aquaculture, the vast majority in small-scale operations in developing countries where almost half are women.¹

While helping to feed themselves, their communities and the wider world, these workers help alleviate poverty, generate national income and contribute to global trade. When those engaged in secondary activities (such as boatbuilding and repair, processing and marketing) are included, plus all their dependents, we see that almost 8 percent of the world's population relies on fisheries and aquaculture.²

But fisheries and aquaculture communities, often poor, are vulnerable to a range of threats. Overfishing and unsustainable aquaculture practices jeopardize the very foundation of their livelihoods. Lack of collateral shuts them out of credit markets. Their rights to land and fishery resources are often insecure. Many people in coastal areas are exposed to natural disasters, a threat that is growing with climate change.

These individuals fail to realize the full benefits of their hard work because they are hampered by unsupportive policies, lack of empowerment and limited access to resources, services and markets. They need help in becoming more resilient so they can adapt readily to constantly changing conditions.

^{1,2} *Source:* FAO. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010. Rome, FAO. 2010. 197p.

RESPONDING TO THREATS: THE FAO PROGRAMME ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND FOOD SECURITY

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has initiated a global programme to help the millions of people whose livelihoods depend on fisheries and aquaculture. Reflecting the challenges they face, it focuses on human well-being, food security and poverty alleviation. The strategy ensures responsible and sustainable use of fisheries and aquaculture resources, with a focus on outcomes that can be achieved by providing guidance, tools and systems. Local case studies will also be undertaken, and their results will contribute to the base of knowledge for broad application elsewhere. The programme will complement FAO assistance for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It also supports efforts to streamline use of development assistance and enhance partnerships between aid donors and recipients, consistent with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

BOOSTING FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE TO ADVANCE WELL-BEING

Participants in a workshop to define the programme's scope agreed on three themes: poverty alleviation, sustainable production and reduced vulnerability to natural disasters. They also noted the close links between climate change and the three themes. Increasing the social and economic resilience of fish farmers and fisheries workers, improving governance, and adopting a holistic approach to supporting livelihoods will strengthen their ability to adapt to climate change and other global challenges. Workshop participants agreed that small-scale fisheries and aquaculture need a more prominent place on the agenda of food security, poverty alleviation and disaster risk reduction. This will require better baseline information and identification of key indicators, which the programme will help to develop.

Theme 1

Improve sustainable production for optimal societal benefits through the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture (EAF/EAA)

Applying the ecosystem approach means producing and harvesting fish to meet the needs of today while ensuring that future generations will benefit in the same way. It addresses both human and ecological well-being. It combines protection and conservation of ecosystems with fisheries and aquaculture management, which focuses on providing food, income and livelihoods in a sustainable manner. This will involve working for policy coherence and putting policy goals into practice – moving beyond the piecemeal planning and top-down approaches of the past, promoting wide stakeholders' participation and using best available knowledge.

Programme activities

- » EAF/EAA pilot implementations in different regions. Based on the pilot implementation experiences, tools and guidelines are produced to facilitate the process at a global scale.

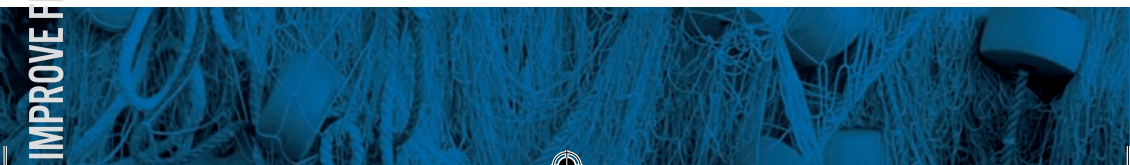
Ultimate beneficiaries

Fishers, fish farmers, communities dependent on fisheries and aquaculture, other coastal zone users and society at large.

Theme 2

Increase contributions of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture to poverty alleviation and food security

Small-scale producers are often shut out of competitive markets. Emerging certification schemes are often beyond their reach, underscoring the need for alternative national and regional schemes. Also, marketing infrastructure often neglects domestic needs and opportunities. Small-scale producers need help in forming groups to strengthen their negotiating power, and they need better access to marketing information to improve their competitiveness.



Programme activities

- » Develop assessment and monitoring methods.
- » Improve market access, both domestic and international.
- » Develop, test and implement policies and best-practice guidelines.
- » Support creation of partnerships and networks.

Ultimate beneficiaries

Poor and food-insecure people, including fishing and fish-farming communities.

Theme 3

Reduce vulnerability to natural disasters among fishing and fish-farming communities

Since 1975, the number of natural disasters has increased, from around 75 per year to more than 400.³ The increase is due almost entirely to weather-related disasters, such as floods, waves, storms and droughts. This means ever-growing threats to fishing and fish-farming communities, and climate change is increasing this risk.

Yet these communities often lack the tools and skills to plan for and manage the hazards they face. This theme is focused on improving the resilience and preparedness of countries and communities, reducing their vulnerability to natural disasters, climate change and HIV/AIDS.

Programme activities

- » Integrate disaster preparedness efforts and mitigation of climate change impacts into fisheries and aquaculture management and planning at national, regional and global levels.
- » Promote a culture of risk and safety consciousness and disaster resilience.
- » Strengthen response and warning systems, starting with disaster risk identification, assessment, management and communication.

Ultimate beneficiaries

Vulnerable riparian and coastal fishing and fish-farming communities, especially the poor and food-insecure.

³ Source: FAO. Report of the Inception Workshop of the FAO Extrabudgetary Programme on Fisheries and Aquaculture for Poverty Alleviation and Food Security. Rome, 27–30 October 2009. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report. No. 930. Rome, FAO. 2010. 68p. Available at www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1516e/i1516e00.pdf

Working together: building on decades of cooperation

Participatory processes lie at the heart of the programme. It will build on FAO partnerships and benefit from FAO's decades of collaboration with governments, United Nations agencies, regional fishery bodies, intergovernmental groups and non-governmental organizations. At national level, the programme will work to improve coordination and delivery of aid through poverty reduction strategy

plans and the UN National Medium-Term Priority Framework. Links with other FAO activities and projects will be strengthened. Coordination will be emphasized, in particular with the FAO Africa Programme and large marine ecosystem projects. These linkages will underscore support to the objectives of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, particularly on harmonization, alignment and managing aid for results.

FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department

This new programme emerges from FAO's core work on fisheries and aquaculture. Building on its global expertise and neutrality, FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Department promotes sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture in inland and marine waters worldwide. Responsible management underlies all of FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture. Its focus is on strengthening global governance, the managerial and technical capacities of Members, improving the conservation and utilization of aquatic resources and empowering people, especially women.

The Department does this by:⁴

- » Collecting, analyzing and disseminating information
- » Assessing and monitoring the state of wild resources and providing management advice
- » Monitoring and advising on development and management of aquaculture
- » Undertaking socio-economic analyses and helping develop policies and strategies
- » Assisting a network of regional fishery commissions and promoting aquaculture networks
- » Monitoring and advising on technology development, fish processing, food safety and trade

⁴ Source: FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department Web site at www.fao.org/fishery/about/en

Next steps

The programme, which parallels long-term FAO work, will be implemented over a number of years. Three regional workshops in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America were held at the end of 2010. These provided insights from the regions, supported partnerships and identified networking and capacity-building needs and opportunities. The results of these workshops will be reported at the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries in January 2011.


The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

The Code reflects the reality that if there is to be enough fish for future generations, everyone involved in fishing must help conserve and manage the world's fisheries.

The Code:

- » Is a collection of principles, goals and elements for action to ensure fisheries are sustained for future generations
- » Calls for collaboration among countries and all those involved in fisheries and aquaculture to conserve and manage fish resources and their habitats
- » Is voluntary, implemented by governments with technical support from FAO
- » Was developed jointly by FAO, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the fishing industry
- » Was adopted in 1995 by more than 170 FAO Member countries



A blue-tinted photograph of a man in a small boat on the water. In the foreground, there are large fishing nets spread out on the water's surface. The man is in the background, leaning forward in his boat.

The development of FAO's global programme to improve fisheries and aquaculture was supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). The Netherlands and Sweden are committed to contributing to the next phase of the programme and additional partners are sought.

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